

**NEW PRAIRIE UNITED SCHOOL CORPORATION
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

GUIDELINES FOR BUS DISCIPLINE

New Prairie United School Corporation is a rural district with approximately 2800 students enrolled and transports about 2600 students daily. The district boundaries itself is comprised in part of LaPorte and St. Joseph counties in Indiana. Our school district is about 168 square miles.

The primary function of New Prairie United School Corporation Transportation Department is to provide and ensure safe transportation to and from school and to all school activities. We have 41 buses in our fleet which consists of type A and C bodies. All buses are serviced at 2000 mile intervals by the Transportation Department.

Bus transportation is an extension of the student's school day which shall include the Student Code of Conduct. Students are therefore expected to show the same respect and care of property as they would in and around the school buildings. Safe, timely bus transportation is a concern of each of us. A partnership and understanding between students, parents, school personnel and the community play key roles and must be maintained to assure safe transportation. Good discipline on school buses is an important part of safety --- good behavior will happen when we work together to make it happen.

Bus transportation is provided by the district, under board policy, for grades K-12 for students residing within the geographic boundaries of the school attended area. Transportation is a privilege and improper behavior by students may forfeit their right to this service. **Building principals may suspend students from riding the bus for a period of time for violation of rules.**

All school children, while being transported are under the supervision, direction and control of the school bus driver and are subject to disciplinary measures by the bus driver and the governing body of the school corporation.

The bus driver shall keep order and maintain discipline among the students while in the bus or along the route. The driver shall also treat students in a civil manner, seeing that no student is imposed upon or mistreated while in his/her charge.

It is important for bus drivers to know their students. Most children want to be recognized one way or another. Bus drivers should promote and recognize good behavior. Drivers using positive interactions with students generally will have less discipline problems. Communication is very important. Greeting students when they board the bus or commenting on a project/sport that the student is involved in lets the student know you are aware of his/her existence.

Minor disruptions can turn into more serious problems. Although no two circumstances in regards to safety violations may be identical, they are still infractions of bus safety and must be dealt with, whether as a verbal reminder, warning or a bus conduct referral write up. Bus drivers should use progressive discipline measures and have documentation of actions taken. Most drivers will give students several reminders and chances to correct their behavior prior to a conduct report form. Drivers understand that kids will be kids and allow some room for mistakes. Again, no two situations are the same. Bus drivers should be fair, firm and consistent when a discipline problem arises. Safety violations and consequences are spelled out within the Transportation guidelines.

At the beginning of and periodically throughout the school year, bus drivers should review the bus rules with their students.

PREVIOUS TO LOADING:

1. Be on time at your stop – the bus must stay on schedule. Students should be ready 10 minutes prior to their pick-up time. Dress appropriately.
2. Stay 15 feet off the roadway-berm until the bus is completely stopped, red lights on and stop arm out.
3. Never run towards the bus. No horseplay.
4. Board the bus single file – use the handrail.
5. If you must cross the roadway to board, wait for the driver to signal that it is safe to cross. Always cross in front of the bus – not behind.
6. Board the bus at your stop only. Students must ride their assigned bus.

WHILE ON THE BUS:

1. The bus driver is in charge.
2. Be seated immediately and stay in your seat. Standing is not allowed.
3. Bad language or hand gestures will not be tolerated.
4. Talk quietly – loud noises, laughing or shouting is unnecessary confusion that distracts the driver's attention and could cause an accident.
5. Keep your hands and feet to yourself. The aisle must be clear at all times.
6. Keep your hands and head inside the bus.
7. Keep your belongings in your back pack.
8. Keep bus clean. No littering or throwing objects in, at or out of the bus.
9. Respect others; do not take anything that does not belong to you.
10. Eating, drinking and use of tobacco products are strictly prohibited.
11. Do not damage the bus interior/exterior.
12. Do not touch emergency exits or equipment.
13. Animals or nuisance items are not allowed on the bus.
14. Be absolutely quiet when approaching a Rail Road Crossing.

15. Card or game play is prohibited.

LEAVING THE BUS:

1. Leave the bus only at your authorized stop unless written permission is given to you by your parent or school official. This written permission must be signed by the building principal and given to the driver as you board the bus.
2. Make sure you have your belongings – use the handrail when exiting.
3. If you must cross the road, cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus. Always make eye contact with the driver before crossing. The driver will signal you when it's safe to cross and you should look both ways yourself.
4. Under no circumstances return to the roadway. Go directly to your house. If you dropped something, get an adult to get it. If you forgot something on the bus, you can get it later.

TO PARENTS:

Learning is a life-long process along with self-discipline. Every child is responsible for his/her own actions. School personnel can only assist and direct a student in a positive behavioral direction. Rules and regulations have been established by the School Board, State and Federal Government for transporting students on school buses. Only with parental support and involvement can a safe and successful discipline management system work. We are only with a child a short time in their life – parents are there a lifetime.

All parents entrust their child's safety to the bus driver when on a school bus. Drivers have the right to expect students to act and behave appropriately while on the bus. Students have a right to have a safe, pleasant and enjoyable ride to/from school. A driver cannot and is not expected to see and hear everything, the drivers main focus is on the road. We encourage every driver to contact the parent when a child displays disruptive, disrespectful or inappropriate behavior toward the driver or other passengers.

Parents are encouraged to review the bus rules with their child and help in promoting positive supporting behavior.

DRIVERS RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Abide by and enforce the rules and regulations adopted by the Corporation for transporting students.
2. To inform parents and administrators of pupil inappropriate behavior while in his/her care.
3. To use low level consequences whenever possible (warnings, seat assignment, reminders) prior to written conduct referrals.
4. To be reasonable and consistent when dealing with a discipline problem.
5. To show respect towards their passengers.

Students, who choose to misbehave, jeopardize the safety and welfare of others or continue to be a distraction while on the bus, will lose their bus privileges. Depending upon the seriousness of the infraction or multiple violations have occurred, steps may be bypassed and a more severe consequence will be allowed. Parents of students will be financially responsible for damages to school buses.

CLASS ONE INFRACTION: Includes documented prior verbal warnings/actions.

1. Failure to follow driver's instructions.
2. Standing/moving seats while bus is in motion.
3. Horseplay, pushing or tripping.
4. Shouting, screaming or excessive noise.
5. Use of obscene/profane language or gestures.
6. Throwing objects in or out of bus/littering.
7. Drinking/chewing gum or eating.
8. Teasing or harassment.

CONSEQUENCES/PENALTIES:

1st Offense:

- Verbal warning or seat assignment
- Contact parents
- Written warning – bus conduct form

2nd Offense:

- Written warning – bus conduct form
- Contact parents
- Meeting – driver, student, principal
- Possible 1 day off bus/time out in office

3rd Offense:

- Bus conduct form
- Meeting with driver, student, principal
- 3 days off bus. Parents notified of suspension dates

4th Offense:

- 5 days off bus – bus conduct form
- Meeting with driver, student parent, principal
- Time out in office

5th Offense:

- 10 days off bus – conduct form
- Parents notified of suspension dates

6th Offense:

- 30 days off bus – conduct form
- Meeting with driver, principal, student, parent
- Parent notified that next infraction, bus privilege may be denied for remainder of year

CLASS TWO INFRACTIONS: Includes previous warnings/conduct forms.

1. Damage/graffiti of school bus
2. Tampering with safety – emergency equipment
3. Placing arms/head out of bus while in motion
4. Threatening of/throwing objects at bus driver
5. Use of or possession of tobacco/lighting of open flame devices
6. Unacceptable sexual conduct
7. Physical aggression or threat of
8. Theft or taking of others possessions
9. Disembarking at an unauthorized location/stop
10. Pushing/shoving of another student within the bus danger zone
11. Refusal to give name to driver or administrator
12. Possession of dangerous items
13. Exiting out rear door of bus
14. Intimidation towards others

CONSEQUENCES/PENALTIES:

1ST Offense:

- Written warning – bus conduct form
- Parents notified
- Principal notified – meeting with driver, student, principal
- Possible bus suspension – 1 day minimum
- Police referral possible
- Restitution on damages

2nd Offense:

- Conduct form – parents notified
- 5 days minimum bus suspension
- Parent notified
- Meeting with principal, driver, student, parent

- Police referral possible

3rd Offense:

- Student bus privilege denied remainder of year
- Principal and parent notified
- Police Referral

CLASS THREE INFRACTIONS:

1. Possession of alcohol, weapons or drugs
2. Assault of driver or other passengers
3. Attempting to ride on the outside of school bus
4. Pushing or shoving another student at or near a moving school bus
5. Running in front/beside of or chasing a moving school bus
6. Detonation of a pyrotechnic device

CONSEQUENCES/PENALTIES:

- Principal and driver discussion at earliest time
- Parent contacted
- Meeting with driver, parent, student and principal
- Police contacted
- Suspension of bus privileges for remainder of school year